



Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

Testimony for the
Public Safety & Security Committee
February 26, 2019

Sacred Heart University strongly supports H.B. 7055: AN ACT CREATING THE CONNECTICUT GAMING COMMISSION AND CREATING A COMPETITIVE BIDDING PROCESS FOR A RESORT-CASINO.

SHU supports the idea of a competitive bidding process that allows the state to choose the best developer for the state. We believe the open-bid process will benefit Bridgeport and the surrounding community economically. While MGM is not the focal point of the bill, the company is estimating the resort-casino would bring in 20,000 visitors on a typical weekend. In addition to driving, developers suggest visitors would travel by train, bus and the Port Jefferson Ferry.

We acknowledge that in addition to benefiting the city, state and region, a resort-casino in Bridgeport will also benefit Sacred Heart and its academic programs in hospitality, resort and tourism management; sports management; performing arts; business; marketing and communications as well as additional programs that we may develop to meet the needs of a large, local employer. Leisure and hospitality is an industry that is showing strong growth and robust hiring nationally. The addition of a resort-casino to the mix in Bridgeport will provide our students with a hands-on opportunity—through internships and jobs—to prepare for employment in the hospitality industry both here and nationally. It will provide the same for current and future area residents.

Therefore, it is also critical to note that this potential economic development should not be dismissed because of regional prerogatives. First and foremost, this project could facilitate aggressively the continued redevelopment of the city. To obstruct such competitive opportunities would be irresponsible and offensive for the Bridgeport community.

We believe that with the addition of this resort-casino, many of our graduates will find jobs and choose to remain employed in Connecticut. That's an important consideration. But our primary reason for endorsing this bill is the employment, redevelopment and revenues that would rejuvenate the City of Bridgeport.

Let people be the reason for the bill's approval and not regional politics the reason for its defeat.

Thank you.

Dr. John J. Petillo, president
Sacred Heart University